

Bankruptcy Court Liaison Committee Newsletter

Highlights of Newsletter:

- White Sox
Outing 2014!
- Welcome Judge
Lynch & Clerk
of Court Jeffrey
Allsteadt!
- Help Desk
Seeking
Volunteers!
- Applications for
2014-15 Liaison
Committee!

The Bankruptcy Court Liaison Committee was formed to promote communication about Court procedures, etiquette, filings and other issues, and to assist the Court and attorneys in creating a more efficient environment. Additionally, the Committee develops and sponsors education programs concerning issues affecting the bench, attorneys, financial institutions and consumers. The Committee also creates social opportunities to allow greater interaction between the Court and those who appear before it.

The Committee provides an opportunity to relay issues, concerns or ideas to the Committee – anonymously – through any of the Committee Members. The information will then be presented to the Bankruptcy Judges for their review and consideration.

Uniform Lien Strip Orders and Other Forms

Uniform Order

One of the concerns voiced by consumer-debtors' attorneys in the recent survey conducted by the Committee was the lack of uniformity with lien stripping procedures in chapter 13 cases. In a move creating greater uniformity, the Bankruptcy Court has implemented two (2) uniform lien strip orders for Chapter 13 cases. One order is for default judgments in adversary proceedings, and the other

for lien stripping by motion. Although diverging methods remain within different courtrooms on the correct procedure to remove liens, the uniform orders simplify the duties for the bankruptcy practitioner where the creditor is not opposing the lien removal.

New Plan

Last November, the Bankruptcy Court introduced a new model

plan for Chapter 13. The new plan has added four overflow lines to Section 3.2, for secured claims being treated as unsecured.

New Schedule I and J

Twelve other forms have also undergone changes which went into effect on December 1st. Most notably, Schedules I and J have undergone drastic changes. The revisions

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Competency in Chapter 11 Cases

Chapter 11 practice has evolved over the past few years to be predominated by many local, small chapter 11 cases which may concern or confront various real estate issues. These cases are often Single Asset Real Estate cases or Individual chapter 11 cases.

In the lead up to filing bankruptcy, debtors seek to find the best value for the work that needs to be performed before the Court. At times, the professionals that step in to represent the chapter

11 debtor have little or no experience in this arena. It is important to remember that there are many items which must be under control and tackled very early in a case in order to allow a debtor the mere possibility of success.

If you are not familiar with this area of law, it is encouraged that you seek out a practitioner to mentor you through your first endeavor in chapter 11. There are inexpensive opportunities through the American Bankruptcy Institute, Chicago Bar

Association, and other organizations to assist you in learning how to represent a chapter 11 debtor.

Moreover, and in an effort to ensure chapter 11 debtors have competent counsel, please note some judges in the Northern District of Illinois will require co-counsel if you do not have sufficient experience (e.g. confirm a chapter 11 plan). If you are considering representing a chapter 11 debtor, complete your due diligence and seek co-counsel, if appropriate, prior to filing.



“Through increased specificity, these updated forms provide detailed instructions . . . and will aid in providing accurate disclosure to the Court

Uniform Lien Strip Orders, Cont.

are part of the Forms Modernization Project, and have been contoured to produce fuller and more accurate responses. The household description has been slightly altered and relocated from the head of Schedule I to the top of the revamped Schedule J. Schedule I now has additional lines under wage deductions specifying between mandatory and voluntary retirement contributions and domestic support

obligations. There are also several additions to specify other sources of income such as unemployment compensation, social security income, and contributions for expenses listed on Schedule J. In the older version these sources of income had to be included manually, which led to a greater possibility of omission. Schedule J has undergone an even greater renovation than Schedule

I, including additional lines for expenses like real property expenses, car payments for two vehicles instead of only one, and childcare and educational expenses. Through increased specificity, these updated forms provide detailed instructions for the debtor and will aid in providing a full and accurate disclosure to the Court, the trustee and creditors.

Liaison Committee Survey Update!

The Survey, translated into a Memorandum for the Court, has been helpful in improving local practice before the Bankruptcy Court. Comments included in the Survey responses are helping the Court consider more uniformity. The comments from the Survey have thus far assisted the Court in amending form orders for lien stripping matters (see above). These orders became effective December 1, 2013.

The Survey also assisted in prospective changes to the Court Approved Retention Agreement, which incorporates the no-look fee.

Updating local rules and procedures is no small venture. Many hours have been invested by the Court, the U.S. Trustee's Office and practitioners to analyze the practical and substantive changes that are being undertaken to improve local practice.

The Committee would like to thank all of the practitioners that participated in the Survey. The comments and suggestions have proven to be very helpful to date and have already been integral in creating a more efficient process.

Help Desk Volunteers Needed!

In the legal community there are many opportunities to volunteer and a wide variety of projects that need volunteers. We at LAF are presently looking for volunteers who have some bankruptcy experience--creditor, debtor, chapter 7, 11, 13--

to volunteer at the Bankruptcy Help Desk.

The Bankruptcy Help Desk is staffed by one attorney who assists up to ten people each day from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Those wanting assistance arrive early and wait for their twenty-minute

consultation with the attorney. People seeking assistance often arrive at 8:00 a.m. to sign up, but unfortunately, most days many people are turned away. LAF and the Bankruptcy Help Desk are

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Welcome Judge Lynch & Clerk of Court Jeffrey Allsteadt

The Committee would like to extend a warm (and somewhat belated) welcome to two new members of our bankruptcy community: The Honorable Thomas M. Lynch and Clerk of Court Jeffrey P. Allsteadt.

Judge Lynch joined the bankruptcy bench on January 1, 2013 and currently presides over all matters heard in the Western Division in Rockford. Judge Lynch has made a smooth transition from his practice with Faegre Baker Daniels LLP to the

judiciary.

On March 10, 2014, Jeffrey Allsteadt took over for Kenneth Gardner as Bankruptcy Clerk for the Northern District of Illinois. As we all are aware, the Bankruptcy Clerk and his staff serve an integral role in our community interacting with and assisting judges, attorneys, and pro se litigants alike.

We send our best wishes to outgoing Clerk Kenneth Gardner and wish him well in his future endeavors.

We welcome Jeffrey Allsteadt and look forward to working with him as the Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Illinois continues to grow and adapt with changes in legal practice and technology.



NCBJ Coming to Chicago in October 2014!

We are pleased to report that Chicago will be the host city of the 88th Annual Meeting of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges.

The NCBJ is scheduled to take place from October 8-11, 2014 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Chicago. With over 150 bankruptcy judges and 1,500 insolvency professionals expected to be in attendance, the NCBJ is one of the country's premier insolvency events.

While the calendar of events for this year's meeting has not been

released as of press time, attendees should anticipate dozens of panel presentations and lectures on a wide variety of legal topics impacting on both business and consumer bankruptcy practice, featuring many Chicago-based Bankruptcy Judges and attorneys, as well as nationally-known insolvency experts.

In addition, a wide variety of networking events and excursions showcasing our city will be in abundance.

In past years national and international organizations, such as the

American Bankruptcy Institute, the International Women's Insolvency and Restructuring Confederation and INSOL have made key contributions to the success of the NCBJ, and this year should be no different.

*2014 Annual Conference
October 8 – 11, 2014
Hyatt Regency
Chicago, Illinois
www.ncjb.org*

Help Desk Volunteers Needed!, Cont.

"As a volunteer, you will provide many services to clients visiting the Bankruptcy Help Desk."

in need of volunteer support in order to assist more people on a daily basis, and allow clients with more complicated cases to receive more than twenty minutes of advice from the help desk attorney.

As a volunteer, you will provide many services to clients visiting the

Bankruptcy Help Desk, whether it is a debtor who lost his job and can't pay his bills, or a creditor landlord, whose tenant filed bankruptcy to avoid eviction but hasn't paid rent in months. You will be able to meet with many individuals, assess their situation, and educate them as to their bankruptcy rights and

options. The Court will thank you, the trustees will thank you, and other attorneys will thank you. The more assistance pro se clients receive from a knowledgeable source, the more efficient the court calls and 341 meetings will be for everyone. Most importantly, you will receive extreme gratitude from clients after you explain the mysteries of bankruptcy and provide them with the information and

Reminder – The Geneva Call: Combined Call for DuPage and Kane County Cases

All matters related to DuPage County bankruptcy cases are being heard in a new location.

Effective February 1, 2014, all matters involving DuPage or Kane County cases are referred to as the "Geneva call" and

heard at the Kane County Courthouse, 100 South Third Street, Rome 240, Geneva, Illinois.

Judge Cassling began hearing the joint Geneva call beginning on February 7, 2014.

For further information, please refer to the Court's Administrative Order No. 13-12.



Tuesday, August 5, 2014
White Sox v. Texas Rangers
\$59.00

Liaison Committee White Sox Outing 2014!

Though it certainly does not feel like it yet, Spring is upon us which can only mean one thing – time to ready yourselves for the Committee's Annual White Sox Outing. Whether you are fan of the White Sox (who are still in pennant contention as of the date of this publication) or just want to socialize, come join us.

We have reserved a limited number of tickets

which will be sold on a first come, first serve basis. To purchase tickets, contact either **Steve Chaiken** (sbc@ag-ltd.com) or **Robin Maatman** (rm@ag-ltd.com)

Date: Tues., Aug. 5, 2014

Vs.: Texas Rangers

Cost: \$59 per ticket (includes Patio Party)

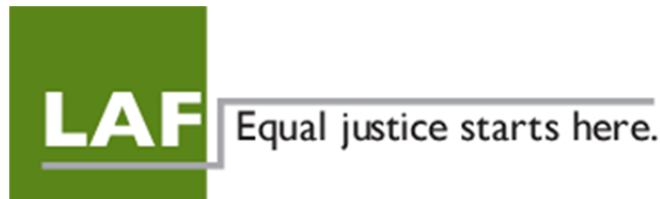
NOTE: For those of you that attended last year, if you did not use all of your "Bonus Bux" and still have your ticket, you can bring that ticket to the ticket exchange booth located on the concourse behind home plate (at any game) to redeem the unused Bonus Bux. Please remember to tell the ticket agent you are attempting to redeem the unused Bonus Bux on your ticket from last year.

Help Desk Volunteers Needed, Cont.

receive extreme gratitude from clients after you explain the mysteries of bankruptcy and provide them with the information and tools necessary to navigate the bankruptcy process without an attorney. Only a few hours of your time can make a big difference. At the Bankruptcy Help Desk volunteer attorneys provide neither follow-up work nor calls to clients, however, you receive the instant gratification of knowing that you helped someone accomplish something important to him.

Please share this with friends, associates, partners, or anyone who has bankruptcy experience who would like to volunteer. We would love to discuss scheduling

options with them. For further information, please contact **Shamira Youkhaneh** at syoukhaneh@lafchicago.com.



Helping the less fortunate, can be a rewarding experience

Bankruptcy Liaison Committee

Steve Chaiken
Jonathan Brand
Kimberly Bacher
Nathan Delman
Toni Dillon
Thomas Fawkes
Phillip Groben
William Hackney
Cari Kauffman
Jeffrey Paulsen
Melissa Root
KC Swanson
Brandon White
Shamira Youkhaneh

Chief Judge Bruce W. Black
Judge Donald R. Cassling
Judge Janet S. Baer
Judge Thomas M. Lynch

Applications for Liaison Committee 2014-15

The Liaison Committee is seeking new members.

Members serve a two-year term and assist in improving local practice before the Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

Interested applicants are encouraged to review the Committee's mission statement and submit a letter describing their interest in joining the Committee and how their unique skill set will be helpful to the Committee.

The Committee consists of practitioners from all corners of the bankruptcy bar, a representative of the United States Trustee's office, and typically three Bankruptcy Judges.

If you are interested in being a member of the Committee, please email your application to:

BankruptcyLiaison Committee@gmail.com.

The deadline for submitting applications is **Thursday, May 1, 2014.**

If you have questions about the Committee or its purpose, feel free to contact any member of the Committee.